

---

# The Outlook: Journal of English Studies

ISSN: 2565-4748 (Print); ISSN: 2773-8124 (Online)  
Published by Department of English, Prithvi Narayan Campus  
Tribhuvan University, Pokhara, Nepal  
[A Peer-Reviewed, Open Access Journal; Indexed in NepJOL]  
<http://ejournals.pncampus.edu.np/ejournals/outlook/>

---

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

## "Enough Is Enough": A Cultural Turn of Youth Activism in Nepal

Yog Raj Lamichhane

School of Business, Pokhara University, Pokhara, Nepal

---

*Article History:* Submitted 25 Feb. 2021; Reviewed 18 Apr. 2021; Revised 28 May 2021

*Corresponding Author:* Yog Raj Lamichhane, *Email:* [lcyograj@gmail.com](mailto:lcyograj@gmail.com)

*DOI:* <https://doi.org/10.3126/ojes.v12i1.38741>

---

### Abstract

*On 9 June 2020, most of the national and international media covered the news related to a youth movement organized under the banner "Enough Is Enough" outside the Prime Minister's residence in Nepal. The movement had non-violently resisted the indifference of the government in responding the Covid-19 pandemic. That was completely different from mostly the violent history of youth activism in Nepal, which used to involve in tussling with police, breaking fences, smashing windows, throwing brick and stone, setting a fire, and lightening torches and tires on the street. Disbarring the health protocols regarding the mass gathering, it got momentum and expanded to other urban centers within a week. The protestors appeared enchanting unique slogans, holding creative placards, and singing the national anthem as well as the lyrics of rock and rap music. Observing all, a question emerges concerning the causes behind the shift from the largely practiced aggressive youth movement to the creative, peaceful and musical form of resistance. To respond the question, this study analyzes the purposively selected photos, placards, slogans and music associated to the movement using interpretive approach. Mainly the insights related to popular culture and their associations to politics by Marshall W. Fishwick, John Storey, John Street and Ray B. Browne have been collectively applied as a theoretical framework in the analysis process. As a result, the study has inferred that the integration of popular culture and resistance has altered the movement to non-violence with wider visibility among media and people.*

**Keywords:** *Enough Is Enough, media, popular culture, protest, youth movement*

### Introduction

The United Nations defines youth as the person's life between the ages of 15 and 24. However, there is no consistency among countries regarding the particular range of the age to define youth. Nepal enacting an act on youth, National Youth Council Act 2015 has considered the age group 16 to 40 years for youth (1). According to the preamble of the act, it not only intends to protect the rights of youth, but also aims to develop them as

---

Copyright 2021 © the Author(s) and the Publisher. This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International \(CC BY-NC 4.0\) License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).



## “Enough Is Enough”: A Cultural Turn of Youth Activism in Nepal

the qualified citizens. Further, it claims to strengthen and include them in the nation-building process.

In the history of youth activism in Nepal, there is no any political struggle where youth have not participated. Among such movements, *Jayatu Sankshritam* (1947) was a student movement firstly initiated demanding a modern curriculum. Later, it was shifted into the very first youth revolt against the Rana regime in Sanskrit School, Kathmandu (Snellinger 21 and O' Neill 1082). There laid a political purpose in the movement though it was emerged as academic movement. O'Neill describes the movement as an inspiration from the Independence Movement of India (1090). The inspiration has served as a wave against absolute authority in Nepal. After that, many student and youth wings were established as the sister organization of the political parties, which have a considerable role in the establishment and re-establishment of democracy in Nepal. The political activism of youth involves maximum actions. It comprises a "dynamic process in which an individual identifies with a collective identity and collective action" (O'Neill 1081). Youth activists are fully engaged in achieving their destination through the cooperative act.

In democratic Nepal, the enthusiasm of youth for different demonstrations, strikes, and political campaigns is a "crucial resource for the 'People's War', in the *Madhesi* as well as *Adivasi Janajati* movements" (O'Neill, Poudel and Maharjan 9). In the history of the armed revolution, youth were motivated, telling them that their generation can change the world. Through such discourse, they learn to politicize the violence. Among different types of violence, cultural violence covers "any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural forms" (Galtung, 294) in politics which could be pervasively observed in the program and the movement operated by them. In this regard, Ramesh Shrestha and Bert Jenkins argue, "youth are portrayed as major actors in performing violent acts" (56). As a quick means of street demonstration, most of the youngsters are highly manipulated by their mother organizations whereas some youth upgrade themselves to party leadership. Political parties have mastery to assign such a role to them. They motivate youth, explaining the suffering of the commoner and presenting them as a potential force to rescue the deprived class from such miseries participating in violent struggles (Shrestha and Jenkins 56). It has developed the narrative that only youth can bring such class out of such hardship. In the various movements of the different periods, diverse forms of inequality and injustice fuel to promote such aggression among youth.



**Fig. 1.** Youth protesting shortsightedness and obscurity of the government holding placards at Baluwatar on 11 June 2020

Source: *Reuters*

As media reported on 9 June 2020, thousands of youth demonstrated outside the Prime Minister's residence at Baluwatar against the incompetency of the government, calmly enduring police batons and water cannons. During the Covid-19 crisis, the peaceful movement as shown in figure- 1 expanded to other cities of the country where the protestors appeared enchanting distinctive slogans, holding flowers and artistic placards, buzzing tuneful lyrics of rap and rock music, and singing the national anthem. Under the banner of "Enough Is Enough", transmitting the message that the protesters would not tolerate anymore, youth demanded government to be serious about the pandemic rather than indulging in power politics. In the past, we have experienced violent youth movements in Nepal. Holding an ideological flag, youth activists used to enchant aggressive slogans. The tussle with police was also usual in most of the cases. Contrarily, this movement has set a new trend of resisting authority peacefully and creatively.

The "Enough Is Enough" movement has a legacy to the peaceful mobilization of youth in Africa. At the very beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, "young people have emerged as active social agents in the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, in the Enough Is Enough movement in Senegal" (Honwana 2428) which were focused on unemployment, corruption, and the denial of freedom of expression. In the same vein, Shiv Ganesh and Cynthia Stohl observe, "'Arab Spring', [the] anti-authoritarian movements in various parts of the Middle East, the 2011 peace protests in Israel, the 2011 widespread agitation in the USA against anti-union legislation, and the 2011-2012 highly visible Occupy movement reflect more than just a continuation of a turn of the millennium events" (425). Moreover, they successfully captured the attention of international media and inspired similar types of movements throughout the globe. Among the movements having an identical pattern and the prospect, the 'Occupy Movement' expanded rapidly and extensively over 900 cities worldwide "from London to Hong Kong and Tokyo to Cape Town" (426). The pervasiveness of social networking sites fueled the movement to spread it globally. Regarding this intensive expansion of connectivity, W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg suggest that the conventional sociopolitical organizations have become weaker and the digital form of "connective action" has surpassed the role of such organizations (748). It also seems to replace the culture of so-called full-timers of any organization.

Similarly, in the case of the "Enough Is Enough" movement in Nepal, unorganized and non-political youth visibly resisted the government's indifference towards citizens regarding the Covid-19 pandemic and the issues related to corruption on it. It attracted thousands of energetic and creative youth in the protest surpassing their violent legacy. It also got more comprehensive attendance and attention. At the same time, it left a question that how this shift in youth activism was possible under the leadership of a loose group, which had neither any political organization nor a militant force.

### **Materials and Methods**

The study has used a qualitative approach. Within this approach, it has followed a constructivist paradigm. It considers that the reality resides in individual thoughts and assumes, "Perceptions of reality are constituted as subjects attach meaning to phenomena and that these meanings arise through interactions" (Zoller and Klineour 93). In this regard, knowledge can be obtained by interpreting the social atmosphere. To do so, this study has involved in textual analysis method. The selected slogans, music, and placards, which were used in the "Enough Is Enough" movement, were considered as text for interpretation. Most of them were in the form of photos from the national and

international media agencies. The music videos of those songs, which were used in the movement as slogans, were also consulted. The screenshots of such videos were also taken and examined to understand the major theme of the songs. To link the potential readers to the movement, some representative photos were presented in this paper with own captions.

The purposively selected data were interpreted in the light of popular culture. Mainly the insights of Marshall W. Fishwick, John Storey, John Street and Ray B. Browne regarding popular culture, and its connection to politics were applied as a theoretical framework. Moreover, the ideas like music and popular culture, sports and popular culture, politics and popular culture, and art and popular culture were exercised to identify how they were actively working in the movement. The study has also covered the new comments of observers and a short portion of the literature review to guide the inquiry in the correct direction. Finally, based on the analysis, the study has inferred the conclusion regarding the role of popular culture in shifting the history youth activism in Nepal.

### **The Politics of Culture**

Regarding culture in terms of 'high' and 'low', popular culture is understood as low culture of margin. Nevertheless, Ray B. Browne does not take it seriously and defines popular culture, "The television we watch, the movies we watch, the fast food, or slow food, we eat, the clothes we wear, the music we sing or hear, the things we spend our money for, our attitude towards life. The entire society we live in may or may not be distributed by mass media. It is virtually our whole world" (260). His definition mostly incorporates different aspects of life like media, food habits, and the means of entertainment. Defining popular culture as specific human activities, Dhurba Karki also asserts, "sports, movies, music, dance, blue jeans, electronic media, and fast food have become increasingly popular across the world" (26). The earlier so-called division might have considered popular culture as the voice of margin only but modern reading blurs the dichotomy to make it preferred aspects of life rather than ignored. Joseph Boskin also disregards the distinction and defines popular culture as no more or less than the culture of people (413). Moreover, Min B. Pun observes such division of high and low categorization of culture somehow like that of Fishwick and Browne. He believes that as political division and takes popular culture as "the beliefs and practices, and the objects through which they [people] are organized" (28). Popular culture as a unifying force of people supports them for the collective action.

In postmodern reading, popular culture becomes the prime battlefield for political fighting (Steinberg 6) and such battle gets visibility through media transmitting messages and meaning to the heterogeneous people scattered in different locations. John Storey also regards popular culture as a combat zone for the subordinate and dominant group (10). It breaks the weaker barricade of binary opposition as John Docker describes the difficulties of the postmodern world where it is "never easy to distinguish between mainstream and oppositional, the conforming and the unconventional, the majority and minority view" (qtd. in Pun 35) because of the ever-shifting centers and margins. It leaves no ground for any categorization to be absolute. Generally, in any society, dominant groups concentrate only on their interests much; however, popular culture has to manage its space to resist such behavior. So to fulfill such responsibility, it actively involves in politics. In the same vein, John Street acknowledges its role explaining how political and social scientists have begun to "examine more closely in which way popular culture functions within political action" (309). Both Street and Steinberg posit the inevitability of understanding the relationship between politics and

popular culture.

Now in social and political movements, observers find diverse changes in terms of language, performance, and ideology. Popular culture dominantly appears there. Alan Scott and John Street also detect, "the medium of modern politics invests it with a particular language and style, both of which derive from popular culture" (223). Such presence of the popular culture in different movements has drawn the researchers' interest. Ultimately, "political and social scientists", John Street views, "have begun to examine more closely how popular culture functions within political action" (309). Popular culture plays a political role in the forms of language, music, image, and performance. Among them, pop music forcefully interferes with politics. In popular culture, regarding politics and pop music, "the last decades have witnessed ever more direct cultural intervention into politics. This is most dramatically illustrated by popular music" (Scott and Street 220). In the last decade of the twentieth century, and the beginning decade of the twenty-first century, popular music has sharpened the awareness among people changing the belief system. Popular culture as a voice of/ for margin, John Storey deems its role for empowering subordinate class and regards it for resisting the dominant ideology (88) as Nepali youth have intended to oppose the government policies. Let us see, how the recent youth movement under the banner "Enough Is Enough" in Nepal applies these aspects to resist authority, demanding to be transparent and accountable to the public.



**Fig. 2 & 3.** A young resister performs a headstand in Shahid Gate on 20 June 2020 and another one practices 'Yoga' in Maitighar on 13 June 2020 while resisting the government's incompetency

Sources: *setopati.com and myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com*

Sport has been developed as an indispensable part of the culture. It deserves a regular space in most of the media outlets. Currently, it also appears in a social movement named "Enough Is Enough" in Nepal. While peacefully resisting the government, a young protestor at Sahidgate stands with his head, turning upside down as shown in figure - 2. Moreover, he holds a placard with a leg writing 'Wake Up' on it. The protestor resembles the behavior of the government, which has focused on irrelevant issues rather than developing effective strategies to cope with the Covid-19 crisis. Both the performance of the protestor and the movement underneath the banner, "Enough Is Enough" reciprocally support each other to collect comprehensive

## “Enough Is Enough”: A Cultural Turn of Youth Activism in Nepal

visibility among media and the public. Raymond Boyles and Richard Haynes emphasize how the media play a "central role in producing, reproducing, and amplifying many of the discourses associated with the sport in the modern world" (7). Such creation of discourse on sports supports the movement in this particular case. In this sense, sport in any social movement can be an "arena of cultural struggle which oppressed groups use as a form of symbolic resistance" (Boyles and Haynes 146). Media reproduce and strengthen such role sharing to the audiences scattered in diverse geographical locations.

Similarly, one of the protestors appears doing 'Yoga' as reflected in figure - 3 while protesting on the street in Maitighar. 'Yoga' broadly incorporates multiple spiritual, mental, and physical implications. Joseph S. Alter excludes this mental and spiritual notion of Yoga related to the embodiment of practitioners to ultimate truth but appreciates its popular material values related to anthropology (213). Now, people are enchanted to 'Yoga' acknowledging the merits concerning the material and mental soundness and it has captured the media attention. Realizing this triangular relationship among culture, sport and media, these two young protestors might have performed by standing on the head, doing 'Yoga' on the street.

The network of communication comes at the centre of any movement. Any socio-political movement as a form of modern politics "requires forms of organization and communication" (Eyerman 43) which utilizes mainly new media as the network of communication to organize the people. Media catalytically supports the movement. One of the initiators of the protest Robic Upadhayay focuses on the role of social media and asserts, "If there was no social media, it would have not been as impactful at it is now" (qtd. in R. Upreti). The geometrical increment of members in the Facebook group maintained by the initiators supports the claim. A parliamentarian, Gagan Thapa, admires the role of social media for heightening the movement. Moreover, he believes social media as the single-most fearful thing for the government. Most of the young protestors move to participate in the movement in different parts of urban Nepal following the notification of social media as their contact network. As suggested by Gary L. Harmon that the participants in popular culture are mostly youth, even teenagers, represent diverse areas without any sense of specific location (8) parallel to the participants and nature of the "Enough Is Enough" movement.

Popular media have given wider visibility to the movement as a network for its expansion and transmission of the creative contents of the peaceful movement. As a result, such mediated content associated with popular sport becomes a tool for the movement to achieve youth attendance, public attention, and nationwide expansion.



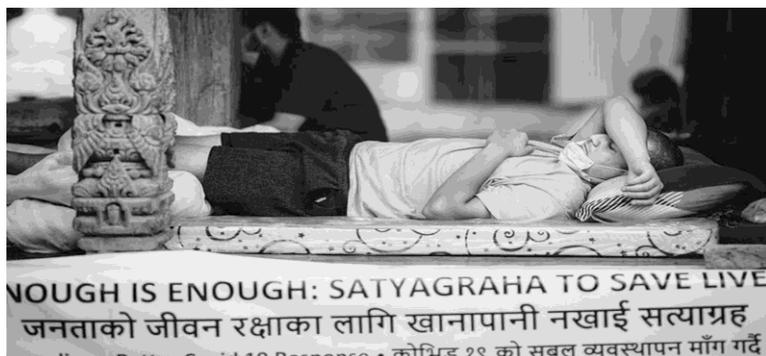
**Fig. 4.** Youth taking part in a peaceful movement in Kathmandu on 12 June 2020 to remind the power of people to authority

Source: *The Kathmandu Post*

## “Enough Is Enough”: A Cultural Turn of Youth Activism in Nepal

Forgetting 'Down With' or 'Long Live', the movement has applied creative placards and slogans to communicate to the public. In the protest, through a big placard on the road, the protestors demand leaders who are in power to be democratic and ask to understand the power of the people to make the democracy stronger as reflected in figure - 4. It sounds identical to Marshall W. Fishwick's comparison of popular culture to an engine, which leads the culture towards 'more democracy' ("Popular Culture" 333). Interestingly, the display of eye-catching placards adds new flavor to the youth-led protest, which transmits "a particular fact as truth" (Pandit 601). It appeals to people as pop-cultural contents and allures to contemplate about the content written or printed there. Most of the placards in the youth march communicate frustration. However, they peacefully demand transparency and good governance enduring police baton with water cannon. The content of some placards becomes so popular that many social media users have shared them as profile pictures on social networking sites. One woman comes with a poster on her back, invoking to 'sanitize the government'. It symbolizes that the government has been turning its back to the problems of the nation and youth as well. However, youth are generally portrayed as "major actors in performing violent acts" (Shrestha and Jenkins 56), the peaceful movement challenges the past discourse of youth activism changing the pattern of protest holding a creative placard exploiting particular art and language, to get popularity among media and people.

Language plays a significant role in developing cultural ties. Sharing becomes almost impossible for humans in their absence. Even without being the official language, English holds significant space in academia, new media, business, and tourism in Nepal. The movement also notably employs the English language, for instance, the banner itself. Jasmine S. Lee and Andrew Moody focusing on the people of Asian countries assert that they adopt "English as a language of pop culture" (6). Globalization has sharpened the influence of the English language where adaptation, code mixing, and code switching are not limited in linguistics. They pervasively appear in new media and dominantly turn up in social movements. The use of the slogans which are entirely written in English such as 'Sanitize the Government', 'Power of the People is Stronger than the People in Power', 'Stop RDT' etc. indicates that the youth largely want to correspond to those class who have a certain degree of command in the English language, and access to new media. Jamie S. Lee and Andrew Moody emphasize the role of the English language in transmitting culture, which can be hardly overlooked (7) in any social movement to capture the ethos of the contemporary time. There is excessive use of the English language in the movement. The use of popular language might be for transmitting the message, communicating especially to youth who are familiar with it.



**Fig. 5.** An activist of the "Enough Is Enough" movement is in fast-unto-death in June/July 2020 in Kathmandu and later he is hospitalized on his 17th day

Source: *Englishonlinekhabar.com*

## “Enough Is Enough”: A Cultural Turn of Youth Activism in Nepal

Non-violence is a form of sociopolitical resistance, which has been successfully practiced to bring political changes in the West and the East. Non-violence strengthens the potentiality of the movement and contributes to popularize it at the same time. Even an opponent could not directly criticize this model struggle. Peaceful resistance works effectively than violent rebellion even to defeat absolute dictators (Bayer, et al. 758). Non-violence effectively works to get the ultimate victory and positive visibility. In the past, the Nepali experience of youth activism mostly serves as muscle power to implement an aggressive strategy like strike, coercive contribution, and a threat to competitors (O'Neill, et al. 4). In this case, the sudden presence of the new youth activism seems to subvert the legacy of violent youth activism as a coercive agent of political parties to threaten the opponent as shown in figure - 5 from the movement. However, Gandhi has discomfort with popular culture; his model of non-violence gets visibility as a popular model of protest. Referring to the beginning of the 21st century, Ashis Nandy notices the "re-emergence of Gandhi in popular cinema becomes not merely an event in the history of cinema in India, but also perhaps a new moment in India's popular culture" (175). All these validate the significance of his popular non-violent model of protest.

Gandhi has discouraged popular culture throughout his life, but his model of resistance seems still inspiring as an icon to draw the attention of people and drive youth to ground zero for the mass protest.



**Fig. 6.** A protestor holding a frame of a painting with some writing on it, which demands transparency, accountability, meritocracy, and the system of reward and punishment on June 20 in Shahid Gate

Source: *Setopati.com*

Painting is generally categorized as elite art, and practiced to keep it beyond the commoners' reach. Nevertheless, the so-called "high culture" becomes popular when it appears as a placard in the movement as a means of protest as shown in figure - 6. The painter or the protestor conceals oneself behind the painting to reflect the primacy of art. It can be linked to understand that the power of people is stronger than the people in power. It also blurs the distinction between the elite culture and mass art as assumed by postmodernism. In this way, painting becomes mass art or the popular art in the protest and such popular culture is "often 'authorless'" (Pun 33). In the same painting, the demands of transparency, accountability, meritocracy, and the system of reward and punishment are written in the English language in an attractive structure as "the medium

of modern politics invests it with a particular language and style, both of which derive from popular culture" (Scott and Street 223). The use of diverse art and performative activism make this movement different from earlier ones.

The protestor ruptures the hierarchy of art in a postmodern manner and drags the painting as a popular culture in this popular protest. It also contributes for the visibility of the movement, and its corresponding supports to democratize the art.



**Fig.7 & 8.** The Shadows Band singing the song "K Paais Nepali Kera" (00:3:50) and A man in Kirtipur on 12 June 2020 tells the government that he could offer only "Banana', not the tax probably by being influenced by the song

Source: *Researcher's screenshot and Setopati.com respectively*

Interestingly, some lyrics of Nepali pop, rock, and rap music appear as slogans in the movement. The line "Ke Paais Nepali Kera"/ "What do you Nepali get? Banana" by Shadows Nepal (00:27-00:30) is used as a slogan and placard. The banana, in Nepali orality, connotes meaninglessness, the meaninglessness of government in the context. The sexual significance of bananas is also presented there to satire people for achieving nothing.

Similarly, the lines of a patriotic pop song, "Yo Man Ta Mero Nepali Ho" (1974 AD 00:36-00:40) have frequently been sung on the street by the protestors aiming to unite people to their specific agenda. Regarding this, Frith Simon argues that music tends to the experience of mutual identity among listeners (273). It develops a sense of togetherness. Moreover, the music also gives agency to the socio-political agenda (DeNora 27) uniting people for a common endeavor. Regarding the effectiveness of music, Annelise Green confidently claims, the "popular use of song allows for their message to be spread and heard easily by large masses of people as well" (13). The protestors seen aware about the intensity of music and applied it to communicate with the people who are geographically scattered.

Correspondingly, two days after the initiation of the movement a line of a rap lyric by Undefeated Ft. Kidson Sins, "Neta Jyu F\*\*k You" (00:36-00:40) echoes as the slogan 'Neta Jyu Fuck You' [completely pronounced] in Kathmandu at Bhatbhateni, even though there consist taboos. Further than its offensiveness, 'fuck' also communicates fury. In such a larger sense, the taboo of 'Neta Jyu Fuck You' could be neutralized if it is perceived as distrust to authority. In this context of using pop and rap in resistance, Theresa A. Martinez highlights that their lyrics "narrate a biting distrust, disillusionment with, and critique of major societal institutions and government" (279) as a valid sort of oppositional life and action.

The next day, a photo of a woman with a placard on her Facebook wall probably replacing the three initials letters with asterisks and transposing some words from the rap song '\*\*\*k You Neta Jyu', has appeared with a note, 'let the citizens decide the word

according to their work'. It goes viral on social media as a form of virtual resistance. Some observers on social media comment it as a disruption of social etiquette and provocation of anarchism by saying 'fuck you' to leaders. In defense, significant numbers of comments have considered it easily as an expression of frustration, anger, and annoyance to leadership. In the modern trend, it looks equivalent to 'down with'. The offensiveness and taboo of using 'fuck you' in social and political life can be simply neutralized as we connect to some popular movements from America. To oppose the patriarchal domination and police brutality in the 'Black Movement' in America, the protestors have used the slogan 'Fuck the Patriarchy' and the song 'Fuck the Police' as a slogan; among them, the first slogan even earns currency selling T-shirts and mugs imprinting it and second gets significance in transferring legacy to 'Black Lives Matter Movement'(Wood 609). Both slogans/songs promote radical offence to patriarchy and intense attack on police intervention. The aggression has recorded in the last 'Black Lives Matter Movement' after the death of George Floyd in American police custody to capture the sentiment of all participants in the protest.

After the use of the Nepali pop and rock music as slogans in the movement, both views and comments have increased in the case of both songs perpetually from the beginning. It indicates reciprocity between popular music and popular protest as well as active facilitation of media.



**Fig. 9.** Police charge water cannon to disperse youth on 9 June 2020 in front of Prime Minister's residence at Baluwatar, where protestors have resisted the government for the mishandling of Covid-19 pandemic

Source: *Reuters*

Police force aggressively has behaved protestors in the movement from the beginning, using batons and water cannons as captured in figure - 9 to disperse peacefully protesting youth. After that, as the protestors know the intention of the force, they seem to bestow a mythical reference of a relationship between maternal uncles and cousin or nephew. According to the relation, an uncle should never torture a cousin or nephew and young people commonly use to address police as 'Mama'/ maternal uncle in day-to-day life. As a fundamental nature of each culture and one of the pillars of popular culture, Marshall W. Fishwick delineates myths as "brave and bold stories that explain how things come to be and why we are as we are" ("Seven Pillars" 155). The myths transmit the whole development process of civilization of each culture. Connecting the police brutality to Nepali folklore, participants of the protest enchant that 'no uncle could beat any nephew and niece' breaching the customary law. The folklore also unites all the protestors in a single category of nephew and niece, which becomes essential for any

social movement to aware that they all share the common ground identifying with each other. In this regard, Joseph Boskin observes that in this or that way, a culture emerges reflecting the folk (414). Myth binds people culturally telling the stories about their past, and it effectively works to motivate people as a form of popular culture to drive them for collective benefits.

As another tool of unification and strategy, the protestors manage to play the national anthem in loudspeakers to defend the possible use of force to disperse them. Above all music and beyond all differences, the national anthem emotionally brings protestors and police together, and discourages police from taking an instantaneous action against resisting youth. The newness successfully works in that new normal. Responding to a question about the capability of today's youth regarding the resistance, Sanjeev Uprety states that this generation has expanded horizon and acquaintance with novelty. The assessment of Uprety also reflects on the model of the protest. John Street has rightly pointed out that the pop-cultural functioning of political action should be focused on music, especially in "nationalist or independence struggles" (309). In the context of the movement, the national anthem serves as a significant political document as well as commonly known music to unite all and rap and rock to seize the ethos of the age to engage youth. Therefore, the music and myth as a popular expression guide the thought and action of the participants and observers to run a peaceful and prosperous social movement.



**Fig. 10.** A new form of resistance, reading books and challenging the government at Patandhoka on 17 June 2020

Source: *Naya Patrika*

The movement has adopted diverse forms of creative resistance while protesting against the government. The protestors sleep on the footpath. They pour colors on their body. Moreover, they read literature in a temple premise as framed in figure- 10. It transmits the symbolic messages to the government to read and understand the problems faced by commoners during Covid-19. In the continuum of culture, reading books generally skews to so-called high culture (Storey 8) but in the age of mass production, it becomes purely popular. As the very nature of popular culture, it communicates a message with the help of the signs. These signs represent "something that makes you think of something else" (Sellnow 26). Rhetorically, the sign treats as an icon, index, or symbol incorporating aesthetic. In this movement, though limited youth have read books there, people and media perceive these signs as far cry. Images are at the centre of this protest and women protestors are primarily attracted by the protest cum reading. That

may indicate that creative resistance could successfully attract women protestors. Alan Scott and John Street have genuinely pointed out that the growth of media and exploitation of images in social movement hint at the appearance of a new political turn in as they use novel sort of communication and action (215). The movement grasps the logic of pop culture and the attention of media through images successfully communicating the agency for people.

In the past, youth were thinking about rethinking the aggressive pattern of activism. Especially in a study of the political engagement of Nepali youth, there lies the rising belief of youth who believe that the time has come to rethink the past culture of largely aggressive and violent youth activism (O'Neill, et al. 4). However, the social movement reviews the existing pattern of youth activism mainly incorporating pop culture in resistance.

### **Conclusion**

From the discussion and analysis in this study, it can be inferred that the adaptation of the non-violent modality of resisting authority attracts youth. Moreover, popular music, especially rock and rap, gets an entry in the social protest that seems successful to retain resisters and appears proficient to contribute for visibility among media and people. Media actively facilitate the reciprocity of music and the movement. Replacing the slogans like 'Down With' and 'Long Live', it applies lyrical music, creative placards, and catchy slogans, which make the movement creative, thereby contributing for shifting the pattern of protest as a pop-cultural intervention. It would be so early to conclude that there is a complete paradigm shift in the youth movements. However, the protesters in the youth-led movement who have concentrated at Baluwatar and in other cities against the government's inefficiency under the banner "Enough Is Enough" have set an inspiring outline in the history of youth activism towards non-violence enduring police brutality. There is enough space to interpret this shift in resistance as an adaptation from the global experience of mass protest of the last decades. The modality of the movement has ruptured the earlier vertical hierarchy sitting and singing on street rather than addressing participants from the higher dais. It might be the adaptation of postmodern modality that deconstructs the permanent centre and margin, which contributes for the heavy endorsement of the movement from people and media in terms of participation and visibility.

If this protest is used as a yardstick to evaluate the success or failure of any movement, it will be challenge for further political or social movements to carry on these non-violent and pop-cultural legacies incorporating sports, music, art, and creative slogans together. Especially, the trinity of music, media, and non-violence has an organic function. As the ethos of the time, they successfully draw the attention of the supporters to participate. Beyond that, this performative movement and its analysis would be supportive to understand how popular culture becomes the site of empowering subordinate class to resist the hegemony of the power bloc. This cultural shift might be a threat as well as an opportunity for further political or social movement to manage maximum participants and get visibility. However, the paper has examined only the pattern of a single movement, another study on the entire Nepali youth activism in the light of cultural studies may offer better results about the significance of popular culture in resistance. The reason behind the significant participation of female youth in the movement can be the area of further research.

**Works Cited**

- Alter, Joseph S. *Yoga in Modern India: The Body Between Science and Philosophy*. Princeton UP, 2004.
- Bayer, Markus, et al. "The Democratic Dividend of Nonviolent Resistance." *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 53, no. 6, 2016, pp. 758-71. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/44510458](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44510458).
- Bennett, W. L., and Alexandra Segerberg. "Digital Media and the Personalization of Collective Action: Social Technology and the Organization of Protests against the Global Economic Crisis." *Information, Communication and Society*, vol. 14, no. 6, 2011, pp. 770-99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.670661>
- Boskin, Joseph. "Seven Pillars of Popular Culture by Marshall W. Fishwick." *Journal of Social History*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1986, pp. 412-14. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/3787736](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3787736).
- Boyle, Raymond. *Power Play: Sport, The Media, and Popular Culture: Sport, The Media, and Popular Culture*. Edinburgh UP, 2009.
- Browne, Ray B. "Popular Culture: 'Medicine for Illiteracy and Associated Educational Ills.'" *Eye on the Future: Popular Culture Scholarship in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Marilyn Ferris Motz, et al., Bowling Green State U Popular P, 1994, pp. 259-73.
- DeNora, Tia. *Music in Everyday Life*. Cambridge UP, 2000.
- Eyerman, Ron. "Modernity and Social Movements." *Social Change and Modernity*, edited by Hans Haferkamp and Neil J. Smelser, U of California P, 1991, pp. 37-54. <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft6000078s/>
- Fishwick, Marshall W. "Popular Culture Studies across the Curriculum." *The Journal of American Culture*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2005, pp. 333-34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1542-734X.2005.00229.x>
- . *Seven Pillars of Popular Culture*. Greenwood Press, 1985.
- Frith, Simon. *Performing Rites: On The Value of Popular Music*. Harvard UP, 1998.
- Galtung, Johan. "Cultural Violence." *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1990, pp. 291-305. <https://doi:10.1177/0022343390027003005>.
- Ganesh, Shiv, and Cynthia Stohl. "From Wall Street to Wellington: Protests in an Era of Digital Ubiquity." *Communication Monographs*, vol. 80, no. 4, 2013, pp. 425-51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2013.828156>
- Government of Nepal. National Youth Council Act, 2015. 12 Aug. 2015. <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/np/archives/45023>. Accessed 25 July 2020.
- Green, Annelise. "The Rhetoric of NWA's 'Fuck the Police.'" *Pepperdine Journal of Communication Research*, vol. 6, no.1, 2018, pp. 9-14. <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/pjcr/vol6/iss1/10>
- Harmon, Gary L. "On the Nature and Functions of Popular Culture." *Studies in Popular Culture*, vol. 6, 1983, pp. 3-15. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/45018100](http://www.jstor.org/stable/45018100).
- Honwana, Alcinda. "Youth, Waithood, and Protest Movements in Africa." *African Dynamics in a Multipolar World: 5th European Conference on African Studies—Conference Proceedings*. Centro de Estudos Internacionais do Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), 2014. [https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/bitstream/10071/7528/1/Halcinda\\_Honwana\\_ECAS\\_2013.pdf](https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/bitstream/10071/7528/1/Halcinda_Honwana_ECAS_2013.pdf)
- Karki, Dhruba. "The Heroic Journey in Popular Culture." *Tribhuvan University Journal*, vol. 29, no.1, 2016, pp. 25-40. <https://doi.org/10.3126/tuj.v29i1.25668>
- Lee, Jamie S., and Andrew Moody. *English in Asian Popular Culture*. Hong Kong UP, 2012.

- Martinez, Theresa A. "Popular Culture as Oppositional Culture: Rap as Resistance." *Sociological Perspectives*, vol. 40, no. 2, 1997, pp. 265-86.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307%2F1389525>
- Nandy, Ashis. "The Lure of 'Normal' Politics: Gandhi and the Battle for Popular Culture of Politics in India." *South Asian Popular Culture*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2007, pp. 167-78. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14746680701619586>
- "Neta Jee F\*\*k You." *YouTube*, uploaded by Undeafed Ft. Kidson Sins, 8 Dec. 2015.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgN837Moyw4>
- O'Neill, Thomas, et al. "Youth Political Engagement and Democratic Culture in Republican Nepal." *HIMALAYA, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2020, pp. 1-12.  
<https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/vol39/iss2/6/>
- O'Neill, Tom. "Student Union 'Political Anti-Politics' in Post-Conflict Nepal." *Journal of Youth Studies*, vol. 19, no. 8, 2016, pp. 1077-092.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2016.1145636>
- Pandit, Mimasha. "Demonstration and Persuasion: Placards and Handbills of the Swadeshi Age (1905-1908)." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 71, 2010, pp. 601-608. [www.jstor.org/stable/44147527](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44147527).
- Pun, Min B. "Re-Thinking of Popular Culture Studies as Interdisciplinary Subject." *Tribhuvan University Journal*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2009, pp. 27-36.  
<https://doi.org/10.3126/tuj.v26i1.2612>
- Scott, Alan, and John Street. "From Media Politics to E-Protest." *Information, Communication, and Society*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2000, pp. 215-40.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180050123712>
- Sellnow, Deanna D. *The Rhetorical Power of Popular Culture: Considering Mediated Texts*. Sage Publications, 2017.
- Sellinger, Amanda. *Transfiguration of the Political: Nepali Student Activism and the Politics of Acculturation*. 2010. Cornell U, PhD dissertation.  
<https://hdl.handle.net/1813/17734>
- Shadows 'Nepal'. "K Pais Nepali?" *YouTube*, uploaded by Tune Core, 3 Aug. 2019.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWcwudHPqXE>
- Shrestha, Ramesh, and Bert Jenkins. "Understanding Youth Political Violence in Nepal." *Millennial Asia*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2019, pp. 56-75.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0976399619827118>
- Steinberg, Marc W. "When Politics Goes Pop: On The Intersections of Popular and Political Culture and the Case of Serbian Student Protests." *Social Movement Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2004, pp. 3-29.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1474283042000194939>
- Storey, John. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. Pearson Longman, 2015.
- Street, John. "The Politics of Popular Culture." *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, edited by Kate Nash and Alan Scott, 2001, pp. 302-11.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470696071.ch28>
- Thapa, Gagan. "Contemporary Youth is Reactive but Compromising" *Naya Patrika*, 11 Aug. 2020. <https://www.nayapatrikadaily.com/news-details/49000/2020-08-11/> Accessed 12 Aug. 2020.
- Upreti, Raju. "Enough is Enough! How it all Started and Where is it Headed." *The Himalayan Times*, 12 June 2020. <https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/enough-is-enough-how-it-all-started-and-where-is-it-headed/> Accessed 12 Aug. 2020.

**“Enough Is Enough”: A Cultural Turn of Youth Activism in Nepal**

---

- Upreti, Sanjeeb. "Democracy has been Mocked, Youth Generation! Learn to be New." *Online Khabar*, 20 June 2017. <https://www.onlinekhabar.com/2020/06/874901/> Accessed 12 Aug. 2020.
- Wood, Helen. "Fuck the Patriarchy: Towards an Intersectional Politics of Irreverent Rage." *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 19, no. 4, 2019, pp. 609-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2019.1609232>
- 1974AD. "Nepali Ho" *YouTube*, uploaded by Music Nepal, 27 July 2009. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYzUD70z8SE>.